

**CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH**  
**BALBOA VILLAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Special Joint Meeting of the Newport Beach City Council, Planning Commission, and**  
**Balboa Village Advisory Committee**

Location: Balboa Pavilion, 400 Main Street  
Wednesday, September 11, 2013 - 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**I. Call Meeting to Order**

Council Member/Chair Henn called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. He introduced and thanked those in attendance participating in the process.

The following persons were in attendance:

**Balboa Village Advisory Committee Members:**

Michael Henn, Council Member (Chair)  
Tony Petros, Council Member  
Gloria Oakes, Balboa Peninsula Point Association  
Ralph Rodheim, Balboa Village Merchant Association  
Laura Keane, Central Newport Beach Community Association  
Tom Pollack, ExplorOcean Representative  
Jim Stratton, At-Large Representative

**City Council Members:**

Michael F. Henn, Council Member  
Tony Petros, Council Member  
Edward D. Selich, Council Member  
Nancy Gardner, Council Member

**Planning Commissioners:**

Bradley Hillgren, Chair  
Tim Brown, Planning Commissioner

**Staff Members:**

Kimberly Brandt, Community Development Director  
Brenda Wisneski, Deputy Community Development Director  
Leonie Mulvihill, Assistant City Attorney  
Tony Brine, City Traffic Engineer  
Fern Nueno, Associate Planner

## **II. Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel Presentation (Attachment 1)**

Urban Land Institute (ULI) Executive Director Phyllis Alzamora introduced the matter and shared information regarding ULI including its mission, a description of the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP), volunteer hours, and issues it addresses. She noted the Panel has various expertise in real estate, planning, finance, design, marketing, and development and deferred to John Shumway for a presentation.

Mr. Shumway commented on the Panel's objectivity and transparency, introduced Panel Members, and provided background of the TAP. He reported that the Panel toured the site and conducted due diligence, the key findings will be outlined this evening, and a written report will be issued in November. He addressed the scope of work and areas of concentration.

ULI Executive Director Phyllis Alzamora reported meeting with the City to create the scope of work and subsequent development of recommendations. She noted that the organization is not a lobbying group, and developed recommendations focusing on five areas. These areas included the existing public-realm corridors (entry areas and focal points for vehicles, boats, bicycles, and pedestrians), existing Balboa Village public realm corridors (entry areas and focal points for vehicles, boats, bicycles, and pedestrians), special events and activities, design, and defining an architectural theme or style for Balboa Village. She reported that the areas of focus guided the recommendations to be presented today.

Shaheen Sadeghi stated that the area of focus is a precious area that represents the past and has a lot of history with a great sense of community and culture. He addressed the importance of authenticity and commented on the opportunities for and preservation of the uniqueness of the area.

Jeff Mayer addressed constraints including difficulty of access and commented on experiencing the journey. Additionally, he noted there are a number of stakeholders that are part of the solution including landlords, tenants, residents and visitors. He pointed out economic issues in play, turnover of properties and expectations and abilities of tenants, adding that it makes for a complex equation. He added that of particular importance to consider is how the area serves existing residents.

Mr. Sadeghi addressed how fun it is to arrive to the area by ferry, and how the area serves the local community. He felt that if the area can offer quality products and services that serve the local community, tourists will come. Focusing merely on tourism does not provide for consideration of service to the community and Mr. Sadeghi noted the importance of local businesses also attracting local visitors. He reported that a sense of arrival at the village is lacking and felt that if a core plaza could be developed, it would act as the "glue" to bring the bay front and beach, together and activate the Village. He addressed existing alleys, having each street double faced, and creating a feeling of discovery around a central, core area/plaza. He stated that the intent is to create a sense of community, culture, commerce, and conscientiousness. Mr. Sadeghi commented on the need for businesses to be sustainable and on the various types of

stakeholders.

Chris Bennett commented on the entry experience, arriving at the peninsula, and ways to announce it. He noted that there should be a clear definition of where the district begins on Balboa Boulevard with appropriate signage as well as on the boardwalk, and as people arrive on the ferry by expanding the current announcement so that it becomes an iconic piece of the entry experience. He addressed location of the proposed gateway signs and ways to increase transit options. Consideration was given to bringing back Pacific Electric for a portion of Balboa Boulevard with restored classic cars, implementing a trolley system, a bicycle sharing program, a water taxi, and a "park once" option.

Shaheen Sadeghi addressed a shift in culture in terms of eating organic food and farming. He stated that "culinary culture" is a new product with emphasis on localization and specialty restaurants, and felt that increasing these types of businesses would make a difference on the peninsula. Mr. Sadeghi noted that the authenticity already exists and that it would involve expanding on it rather than creating it. He addressed better utilization of alleys and reported that every street and corner offers an opportunity with the possibility of re-zoning for outdoor dining and the possibility of having a row of restaurants on the sand at the edge of the existing parking lot.

Jeff Mayer addressed existing focal points including the Pavilion, Ferris wheel, park, pier, boardwalk, and Balboa Inn. He added that focal points are landmarks and used as wayfinding, and addressed the importance of a sense of orientation and branding.

Matt Shannon reported that the Pavilion is the most iconic landmark in the Village and should be celebrated. He suggested turning the "turn-around" area on Main Street, in front of the Pavilion, into a plaza and opening it up to a public space for small-to-mid-size community events. He addressed key intersections at Main and Balboa Boulevard and pointed out that an existing structure at the southeast corner of that intersection needs to be replaced with something larger and more substantial in nature. He commented positively on a building on the northeast corner of that intersection and a pharmacy and the Balboa Inn at the other corners. He addressed Palm Street and Balboa Boulevard and commented on the urban feel of the area but noted an existing building on the northwest corner that seems out of context. He suggested that could be redeveloped in the future to anchor the corner. He addressed traffic on the street and concerns that the buildings in the area do not face the street adding that the area could support retail spaces on both sides of the street. He suggested having a building at the end of Palm Street, where it meets the beach, which provides a terminated vista with a new iconic building. ExplorOcean is seen as a great opportunity to spur and drive additional traffic (in terms of more human activity) in the Village. Mr. Shannon addressed Balboa Theater and commented positively on the City's efforts to renovate it.

Jeff Mayer addressed phasing capital improvements in the Village over time and activating the streets by creating more indoor/outdoor spaces at building edges and looking at opportunities to create niches in the sidewalks where people could enjoy the outdoors. Façade improvements

would be an important part of a revitalization program but provide only a piece of the overall plan as well as the orientation of buildings to the streets. He affirmed that existing signage aids in the creation of a cultural heritage, stressed the importance of landscaping in softening the hard, urban edge to an area, introducing trees that might complement the existing tall palm trees and would provide a canopy more related to human heights, and creating seating along sidewalks. Additionally, he addressed improvements in night lighting and the possibility of closing Bay Avenue to vehicular traffic, bringing in vendors and creating more activities on the street as a pedestrian zone.

John Shumway offered ideas for implementation that might activate the Village and presented a list of ideas in which the City should invest time. He addressed existing events (i.e., Christmas Boat Parade) and suggested the possibility of a Farmers Market, craft shows, art shows, vintage car exhibitions, boat shows, craft beer fest, seasonal music festivals, food trucks, and a Taste of Balboa.

Matt Shannon reported that some aspects in the Village are anti-pedestrian. He addressed small lot sizes and noted that existing small sidewalks present challenges for outdoor living experiences. He felt that finding a way to widen some of the key sidewalks would be a positive, long-term goal and explained there is an opportunity to do so by doing a re-striping and reconfiguring Balboa Boulevard. He reiterated recommendations regarding introducing a plaza as the heart of the Village on the existing City parking lot and strengthening the connection between the ocean and the bay by creating more opportunities for congregation. He added that it is not good to have blank walls if the intent is to create a good pedestrian experience and addressed the benefits of windows with non-reflective glass with retail tenants and continuity of the hardscape, landscape, street furniture, lighting, and signage.

John Shumway commented on the City's creation of a parking management plan and commended the City's efforts. He felt that the plan has merit, stated that the group supports the City's "park once" concept, and that the City should move forward with the plan as soon as possible.

Jeff Mayer commented on re-striping Balboa Boulevard between Adams and A Street and suggested installing an arrival sign or an archway and implementing an entire program of change with the possibility of a change in the paving material that would provide the visual cues of being in the Village; reinforcing a sense of place. He suggested having parallel parking on both sides of the street with a median with canopy trees.

Simon Hibbert commented on opportunities for urban design improvements noting that the area offers possibilities for pedestrian walkability and human scale. He presented graphic representations of the concept including identification of the key intersections. He added that the City parking lot is an important location for "Village defining" and provides an opportunity for a plaza and light retail and food and beverage. He addressed the Main Street and Balboa Boulevard intersection noting that it is a major meeting point.

Chris Bennett commented positively on the Façade Improvement Program, existing historic structures, maximizing store fronts on the street, and having store fronts on both sides of the street, whereas currently, there are a lot of gaps in experience. He commented positively on the City's plan to restore the Balboa Theater and felt that the same consideration should be given to existing historical buildings in the area. In addition to the architectural, eclectic heritage, he noted that the area has a graphic heritage that is unique. He noted the importance of restoring existing signs and use of the same styles for future signage focusing on amusement, fun, and entertainment.

Shaheen Sadeghi commented on the possibility of adding artist spaces and art galleries and work/live areas. He addressed the boardwalk and activating every aspect of the Village. He commented positively on ExplorOcean and shared that to have a perfect balance of community; all of the various elements need to work together. He addressed a deed of trust, responsibilities as gatekeepers of the area, and thinking into the future.

Matt Shannon reported that everything that will be done at the Village will have long-lasting effects in the years to come. He noted that City's resources are limited and addressed prioritizing projects, a targeted tenant-attraction program, and centralized management and marketing of the Village using the Merchants Association or other expanded authority. In terms of the corridors that need the most attention, Mr. Shannon reported that a central park/plaza will be an important anchor in the Village, followed by Balboa Boulevard improvements, and the possibility of closing Bay Avenue for vehicular traffic. He commented on Main Street improvements and alley spaces. He addressed ExplorOcean as an opportunity to attract visitors to the Village and being a catalyst for redevelopment. He reported that architectural style should be dictated by the community. He noted the need to bring in the right planning consultant with expertise on form-based codes; codes that are designed to prioritize the physical form of buildings as well as the use of the building. The idea is that the Village would stay urban and walkable. Mr. Shannon suggested that the form based code should be used on the peninsula between Balboa and Lido Villages.

Phyllis Alzamora open the meeting for questions and answers.

Chair Henn indicated he likes the idea of a central plaza/core but noted the need for parking solutions as well.

Council Member Gardner noted the need for Coastal Commission review and wondered if there would be an opportunity for removal of some of the parking while still providing access to the area.

Matt Shannon noted that trolleys and light rail lines are coming back and that ExplorOcean is eager for a multi-level parking structure at the City parking lot. A parking lot could be rebuilt in a different physical form to create a park and the possibility of a subterranean parking lot under the new ExplorOcean facility and a new subterranean level under the existing parking lot on the beach.

Shaheen Sadeghi commented on building what you can park and felt that the idea should be to design the Village, design the needs, and then develop parking solutions. He noted that there are a lot of opportunities and that parking problems will exist. He believed that a smart parking plan could solve the problem. He addressed shared parking and felt that compromises could be reached.

Matt Shannon cautioned against installing a large parking structure on Balboa Boulevard but felt that there are things that could be done to resolve parking problems.

A member of the public noted that the area has an ocean and a bay and felt that the area already has what people want and that easier access to the ocean and harbor is what is needed. She agreed with changing the existing parking lot into a plaza for community events and gatherings.

A member of the public commented the possibility of reviewing what occurs in small lake areas in Europe with small boats that link small villages.

A member of the public commented on the need for an evacuation and safety plan for residents of the Village. She stated that if one of the lanes is eliminated, it will eliminate a key corridor for residents to use to exit the peninsula.

Phyllis Alzamora reported sea-level rise is also an issue but that the Panel was not tasked with addressing that issue. She noted that evacuations were made during 9/11 by boats where 500,000 people were evacuated in four (4) hours and that the Village already has an evacuation plan.

A member of the public commented on the desire to make the area a destination as opposed to embarkation for other destinations and activities without a chance for economic capture, and wondered about the possibility of moving the Catalina Flyer and fishing businesses to other areas. He wondered what types of other economic incentives have been observed to encourage proper development and penalize those who do not maintain their properties and are hurting the City.

It was noted that with planning and having the right products, the "captured audience" could be seen as an advantage.

Ralph Rodheim, Balboa Village Merchant Association Member thanked the Panel for its work and recommendations and addressed the need to build the best Village and look at parking as an extra issue. He commented on the Embarcadero area in San Francisco noting that they have brought back the Red Cars and rail cars. He felt that the key to the peninsula is providing off-site parking outside of the peninsula.

A member of the public commented positively on the recommendation for an archway and wondered regarding possible limitations in the Building Code that would preclude building it.

Community Development Director Kimberly Brandt commented on City Council policies regarding signage that projects over the public right-of-way but felt that the matter could be explored and that through the Planning Commission and Council process, and noted that this type of treatment may be appropriate for the Village.

Council Member/Chair Henn noted that Council is able to change policies and commented positively on creating ideas that stimulate the City to change things and break down barriers.

A member of the public felt that the report has emphasized ways to increase tourism as the only way to make the community more viable. He stated that when parking meters were installed, the diversification of businesses began decreasing and the amount of local residents supporting those businesses decreased as well. He commented on the difference between Balboa Island and the Village in terms of parking access and the importance of the same in supporting businesses. He felt that the issue of businesses to support local residents has not been addressed.

Shaheen Sadeghi stated that the Panel believes it is about local residents and not tourism. He shared that if consideration is given to providing great products and services for the local community, visitors will come. He noted that parking is an issue in many communities and noted that there are many different solutions but that each of them has a compromise.

Phyllis Alzamora referenced the upcoming written report noting that it will present more of the Panel's opinions to focus on the needs of local residents. She thanked the City for seeking the Panel's advice and recommendations and thanked the Panel for their time and input. She commended the City for opening the process up for the public noting the importance of transparency.

Council Member/Chair Henn thanked the Panel and stated he looks forward to the formal report. Additionally, he thanked the Balboa Village Advisory Committee for its efforts in making this happen.

**III. Public Comment - None**

**IV. Public Comment on Non-Agendized Items (comments limited to 3 minutes) - None**

**v. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Balboa Village Advisory Committee, Chair Henn adjourned the meeting at 5:46 p.m.

Next Balboa Village Advisory Committee Meeting Date: Wednesday, October 9, 2013 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.